

Wednesday, April 9, 1975

AGVA Impasse Deepens; Rio Sues For \$2-Mil Libel Vs. Penny

Hollywood, April 8.

Eddie Rio, a candidate for executive in the current American Guild of Variety Artists special elections, has brought suit for libel against another candidate, incumbent Penny Singleton. He asked damages of \$2,000,000.

The action, filed in Los Angeles Superior Court, charged Singleton with making false and malicious statements in commenting on a news story published Jan. 15 in *Variety*. The story dealt with financial matters, including money due the law firm, Delson & Gordon, which had been hired by AGVA board members.

Rio's complaint quoted directly from Singleton's campaign literature.

She stated, according to the suit, that there was "more than \$80,000 either illegally collected, unauthorized or just plain missing, and Eddie Rio has the gall to ask for your vote." The campaign circular asked, the complaint alleges, "Do you really want either of these men to run your union or do you want honesty, integrity and the protection of your money?"

The other man referred to is Russell Swan, also a candidate for exec prexy. Swan had been the union's secretary-treasurer.

Attorney T. Roger Duncan filed the case in a state court because the Singleton circular was sent to some 2,100 AGVA members in L.A. County.

Mike Priddy of Las Vegas also is running for exec prexy.

Rio's suit names Singleton, Jack Haley, who is seeking the post of exec vice-president, and 10 as yet unidentified persons also seeking national office in AGVA.

The special election developed after extended legal action in which the Rio and Singleton forces fought in the courts for control of the union. Each claimed the office following an election late in 1973. Each accused the other of irregularities.

Eventually the U.S. Dept. of Labor entered the controversy and moved the case from the Supreme Court, a lower court in New York, to the Federal Court there. Federal Judge Morris Lasker ordered the new election and instructed the Labor Department to supervise it.

Ballots have been sent out. Deadline for returning them is April 30, with an official count due May 2.

In addition to exec prexy, candidates are running for exec v.p., secretary-treasurer and 16 regional vice presidencies. Elected veeps will become the AGVA national board.

Cedar Point Gives Up Plans For Mich. Project

Cedar Point Inc. has abandoned plans to build a \$15,000,000 amusement center in Michigan's Irish Hills section because the Cambridge Township Planning Commission failed to act on CP's request to rezone the 160-acre site. This disrupted the timetable which would have made it impossible to open in the spring of 1976.

Because of opposition by some residents in the area and the subsequent necessity to submit the question to a referendum, it would be impossible to start construction until 1976, according to Robert L. Munger Jr. CP president. Munger stated that the company was still interested in building in Michigan and is presently evaluating other sites.

ABC Sets Tent Sked At Smithville Towne, N.J.

The Smithville (N.J.) Music Theatre, a 2,400 seat outdoor tent operation, opens a nine-week season with Mike Galloway producing for ABC. House will book names as well as musical comedies and dramas.

Theatre is part of the Historic Towne of Smithville located 12 miles north of Atlantic City, which is owned by the American Broadcasting Co.'s Leisure group. It's part of the ABC Scenic & Wildlife Attractions which also includes the Wildlife Preserve, Largo, Md.; Weeki Wachee Spring, central Florida, and the Seven Seas Seal Park, Arlington, Tex.

Four Unions Draw Cards In Vegas For Casino Staffer Votes

Las Vegas, April 8.

Everybody wants to get in the act on the casino union stage with addition of two more unions on MGM Grand Hotel ballot. Approximately 520 casino dealers, keno runners and writers, shills will have four choices on the April 11 ballot, choosing original petitioners Local 7 of Las Vegas Casino Employees, newcomers Casino Employees of Nevada, Local 3061 and Teamsters Local 995, or, they could reject them all.

The MGM Grand effort is Local 7's first plunge after laying back for some years. Local 3061, Casino Employees of Nevada, is an affiliate of Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC) and was the first union to win okay to rep gaming employees in a Las Vegas casino when Desert Inn employees voted them bargaining agent last Nov.

Since then Local 3061 won the Landmark, lost the Flamingo Hilton and Royal Casino Inn. Both successful ballottings were run up in Howard Hughes owned hotels. Union also has petitioned for an election at Hughes' Silver Slipper, with NLRB setting up April 12 for that vote. Local 7, affiliated with the strong Culinary Union, has petitioned to intervene at the Slipper with name on the ballot. Teamsters are out of that election.

In the Grand voting, if one of the three unions receives over 50% of the vote, it wins the right to rep all employees as bargaining agent. If over 50% of employees nix unions, none will be allowed to rep them and another election cannot be held for a year. If no one wins over 50% of the vote, a runoff election will be held between two toppers, either two of the unions or one union against no union at all. NLRB will supervise.

Munich's Regina Folds

Munich, April 8.

The Regina, once one of Germany's top hotels, closed last Monday (31). Built in 1907, the 360-bed hostelry on the Maximiliansplatz had been modernized, but in recent years it was not a profitable enterprise.

An insurance company bought the structure for a reported \$10,000,000 and will remodel it for its headquarters. Prior to World War II, the Regina was Munich's No. 1 hotel.

Orleans Nixes Buffalo In Spat Over Setup Time

Buffalo, April 8.

Folk-rock group Orleans refused to go on at Kleinhans Music Hall Thursday night (3) when the hall couldn't grant them the two hours they said they needed to set up their sound system.

The Barbara Sinclair Group, local combo, went on in their place on underside of bill featuring Golden Earring. In heavy snowstorm, concert grossed barely \$4,500 out of \$15,000 potential in 2,900-seat hall.

Disney Parks Hit New Highs In Wkly. Gate

Orlando, Fla., April 8.

Walt Disney World, here, registered the biggest week in its history with an attendance of 463,815 for the Easter holiday week ended Saturday (29), surpassing the previous single weekly record of 439,906 set during the 1974 Christmas week.

On three successive days during the pre-Easter week, Walt Disney World exceeded its previous single-day record of 74,597 which was registered Friday, Dec. 27, of last year. New single day high was set Tuesday, March 25, with 82,285. Attendance at the Orlando resort for the six months ended March 31 was running 13% ahead of fiscal 1973, the previous record year, when attendance totalled 11,600,000. Attendance at the California spot was running ahead of the same period in 1973 by 6.1%.

Attendance at Walt Disney World for the six months ended March 31 totalled 5,197,000 which is 27.9% ahead of the same period in the prior fiscal year. Attendance at Disneyland, during the same period, was 3,388,000 which is 9.1% ahead of the same period in the previous fiscal year.

Attendance at Walt Disney World during the second quarter of fiscal 1975 increased 49.5% to 3,149,000 while patronage at the Disneyland was hiked 19.1% to 1,640,000 a record for any quarter in Disneyland's history. The figures include 10 days of the 15-day Easter vacation period, all of which fell on the third quarter of the 1974 fiscal annum.

P.R. Govt. Unit Sifts Amus. Park Pact Granted TV Prod. Vigoreaux

By AL DINHOFFER

San Juan, April 8.

A House committee of the Commonwealth government began an investigation last week into the controversial contract granted local TV producer Luis Vigoreaux by the Parks & Public Recreation Administration to develop Las Americas Park. Both minority political parties threaten court action if the contract is not rescinded.

The contract grants Vigoreaux the right to develop an amusement park and other facilities on an 80-acre area adjacent to Hiram Bithorn stadium on a 35-year lease, paying a nominal rental initially set at \$36,000 annually. The land reportedly is worth in excess of \$34,000,000 and was expropriated by the Commonwealth in 1952 to be used for "public passive recreation."

Testifying at a hearing, conducted jointly by the House government, Recreation & Sports, and Socioeconomic Development &

Westchester Theatre Has Good Acoustics In Hangar-like Setting; Suburban B.O. For Takeoff Dates

By SYD SILVERMAN

The Westchester Premier Theatre is the new kid on the block in terms of New York suburban show biz. It's a 3,512-seat theatre at the confluence of three major interstate highways in Elmsford, N.Y. and has easy access to show goers from New Jersey and Connecticut as well as from Westchester, Rockland and Nassau counties in the Empire State.

Parking for 1,500 cars is included in the 16-acre site and while there is no direct charge to stash the family bus, a 50¢ fee is included in the ticket price to cover the cost. The house is scaled to a \$9.50 top.

Cost of the complex is put at \$5,500,000 with \$1,100,000 of that allocated to land acquisition. Be-

Westchester Premier Theatre

Shirley Bassey, Peter Nero, Tony Cabot Orch; \$9.50 top.

cause the site was originally a marsh area, 70-foot spread pilings were required in construction, but there is no evidence of its wet heritage in the finished project. Some 300 private stockholders were assembled by Elliot Weisman, WPT president, to finance the project, including such show biz names as Alan King and Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme, who are reportedly set for future dates.

Ralph Alswang designed the house, including two restaurants with a total capacity of 400, so that the gently raked auditorium meets the 65-ft. three-quarter round stage in an informal yet comfortable atmosphere. The stage, which can be expanded to a maximum depth of 50 ft., is slightly offset to the right so that the seats on the extreme left appear to be at the greatest distance from the goings on and it was in this area that some vacancies were seen at the show caught. Lighting was professional and the sound system appeared to be first rate with no apparent acoustical problems.

Hangar-Modern

Alswang has done the interior in contemporary airplane hangar-modern with garish colors and exposed upper structure in the interest of trimming costs. Seating is comfortable with adequate knee

(Continued on page 64)

Sinatra Set At 3 German Concerts For 152G Each

Munich, April 8.

Frank Sinatra has been signed by tour agent Marcel Avram (Mama Concert) to appear in Munich's 10,000-seat Olympia Hall May 23 for a fee of about \$152,000. He's scheduled to sing two hours. After the local stint he is booked for Frankfurt, May 25, and Berlin, May 26, for the same money at each concert.

Olympia Hall will be scaled from \$4.35 to a \$66 top. And if the hall can't be filled with Munich patrons, Avram plans to bring in some 3,000 Sinatra fans from London in chartered planes.

Trude Heller's, N.Y., will start a headliner policy tomorrow (Thurs.) with 20th Century. Subsequent acts, all down for one week, will be Holly Woodlawn, April 17; Cherry Vanilla, April 24; and Laura Kenyon, May 1.

Hyatt Hotel Preem In '76 To Speed Waikiki Rivalry

Honolulu, April 8.

Hotel rivalry will be stepped up in summer, 1976, when the 1,260-room Hyatt chain operation opens in the heart of Waikiki. The first 500 rooms will open in June, 1976, the balance by August.

Facility consists of two twin-40-story towers that will have a central lobby 12 stories tall with five cascading waterfalls.

Bette Midler SRO On B'way; Extend Run To 10 Weeks

Bette Midler's "Clams on the Halfshell" revue, scheduled for an April 14 opening and a four-week run at the Minskoff Theatre, N.Y., is a sellout, and producer Aaron Russo has extended the show an additional six weeks.

Scaled to gross \$190,000 per week, the show has sold \$760,000 worth of ducats and now has a gross potential of \$1,900,000. There are a few tickets left for Saturday (12) night's preview, Russo said.

Tickets for the extension will go on sale opening day and Russo is predicting the same crowds which lined up around the block 12 hours ahead of the boxoffice opening some weeks back in a rainstorm.

In Philadelphia last week, the show sold out and grossed \$253,000. Lionel Hampton's orch is featured and Ron Delsener is assistant producer. Delsener has just concluded an agreement, via Pace Management, to book acts for the opening week of the Superdome in New Orleans.

'CAPADES' HAWAII DATE

Honolulu, April 8.

"Ice Capades'" annual return is set for May 1-11 with 15 performances in the Honolulu International Center Arena. Show is scaled to a \$6 top.

Unit features Karen Magnussen, making her first appearance here.